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# THE GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

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## SOME TYPES OF CITIES IN TEMPERATE EUROPE

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A score of miles away the traveler in the Beauce sees the spires of Chartres rising from the plain, commanding the monotonous levels of this "ancient land of harvests." On closer approach the dominance of the church of the two spires is still more closely felt. For centuries Chartres has retained its original character as an agricultural market town: it has suffered little from the obscuring effects of industrialization. In the old houses clustered round the cathedral, in the markets under its shadow, in the narrow streets leading therefrom the feeling of that protective power, the medieval church, is still present.

Thus clearly and impressively Chartres presents that physiognomy of a city type characteristic of temperate western Europe. It is of this type that the present study attempts an analysis.<sup>1</sup> The distinctiveness of the type may perhaps be the better appreciated by a preliminary contrast with a city type of southern France.

It has often been said that the contrasts between southern and northern France, between the Roman and the Frankish country, between the Midi and the Paris Basin are very profound. In the south many important towns go back to Roman origins. In the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire civic life was at a low ebb; yet it survived, however impoverished, and the regrowth of the town later on, usually in the earlier Middle Ages, owed something no doubt to the remains of antiquity.

### THE ROMAN TRADITION IN SOUTHERN FRANCE

The Place du Forum of Arles, the Place du Capitole at Toulouse, the square with the perfect Maison Carrée at Nîmes are the centers of their

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<sup>1</sup> Valuable historical studies of town planning have been made by many writers, and the results of several have been made available for the general reader in such books as: F. J. Haverfield's "Ancient Town Planning" (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913) and T. F. Tout's "Mediaeval Town Planning" (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1917.)

The present essay in no way attempts to touch upon that field or to criticize the views of those authors; it aims rather to make an estimate of the characteristics of cities which have grown up bit by bit, using for this purpose some cities of temperate Europe.

respective towns, and subsidiary centers are made by the remains of amphitheater and theater so that the town map has something of the appearance of a polyaster. The subsidiary streets may be tortuous, and the polyaster may be influenced by fairly late reorganizations; but the type is characteristic none the less, though with modifications and complications that

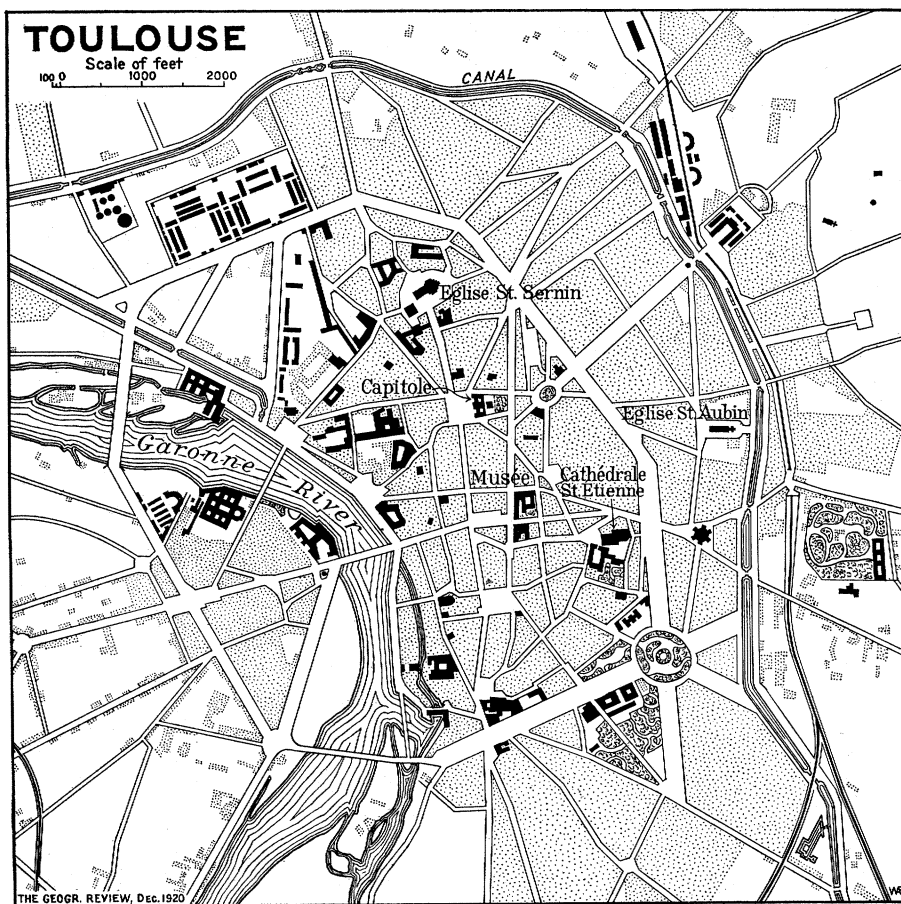


FIG. 1.—Town map of Toulouse. The Capitole, or Hôtel de Ville, faces on the market place in the center of the town, while the Cathedral of St. Étienne and the fine Romanesque church of St. Sernin form subsidiary centers. The plan is typical of towns of the Roman tradition in southern France.

seem to illustrate the incoming of northern influences. The chief Christian church is not in command of the central square; it touches it in the case of Arles but only peeps in from the side, as it were. There has been continuity of urban life from Gallo-Roman days, and, when the opportunity of the medieval church arrived, it was forced in the Roman south to fit itself into the city as best it might. The cathedral of Toulouse is a poor affair, appropriately tucked away in a corner, and, though the city may well be proud of

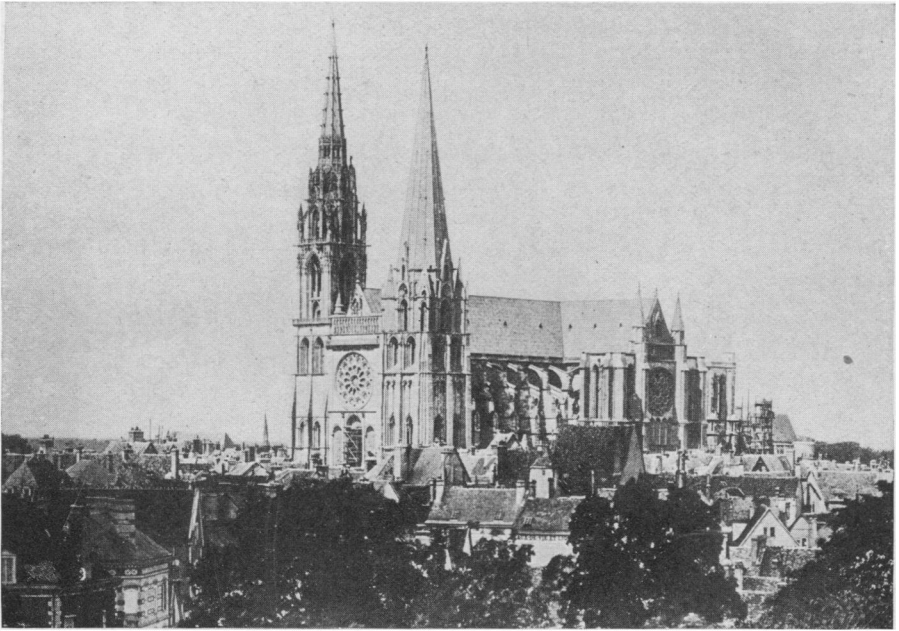


FIG. 2

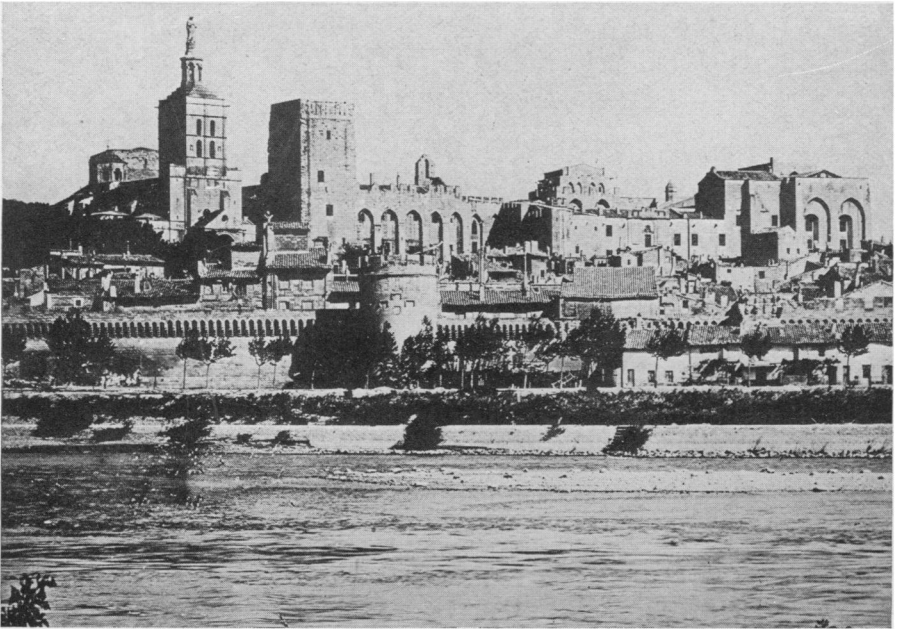


FIG. 3

FIG. 2—The Cathedral of Chartres, whose twin spires command the level stretches of the Beauce. See the map of Chartres, Fig. 4. (Copyright by Brown Brothers, New York.)

FIG. 3—The Palace of the Popes at Avignon. See the map of Avignon, Fig. 13. (Copyright by Brown Brothers, New York.)

the magnificent older and Romanesque church of St. Sernin, that great monument is on a site which forms a subsidiary center right away from the Place du Capitole.

But this is not the place to discuss the towns of the Roman tradition in southern France; the short mention of them here is merely for the purpose of emphasizing the contrast between them and the typical towns of the Paris Basin. In the Paris Basin some towns, it is true, date from Roman or even

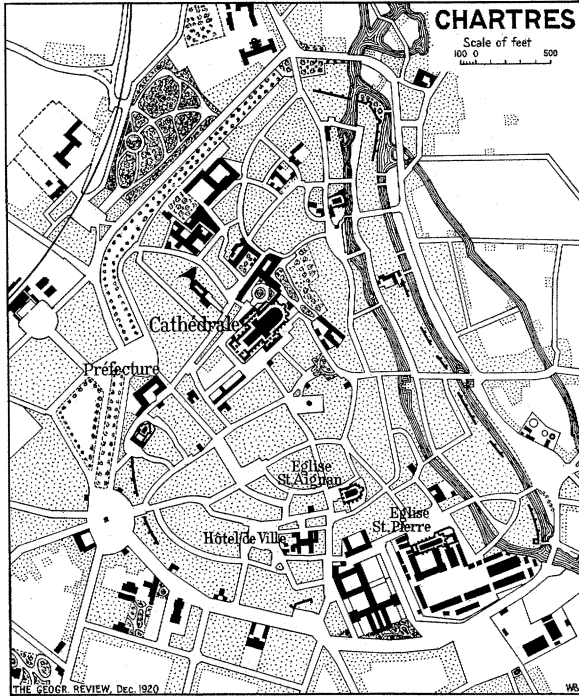


FIG. 4—Town map of Chartres. Dominance of the cathedral is typical of towns of the Paris Basin. See also Fig. 5.

earlier times, but they nearly all owe their character almost entirely to centuries subsequent to the fall of Rome; the few exceptions there and in Britain and central Europe are mostly mentioned by Haverfield.

#### THE TOWNS OF THE PARIS BASIN

In the Paris Basin the influx of Germanic and other invaders submerged the Roman tradition and the more effectively so because those invaders brought for the most part a rural, when not actually a semi-nomadic tradition that stood out in contrast to the urban heritage of Rome. In Roman western Europe the wealthier and more powerful persons lived in the towns and used the surrounding lands as sources of revenue, providing amphi-

theaters and other buildings in the towns as places for festival gatherings of the rural folk. In the Paris Basin it was the Frankish invader who was largely responsible for reorganization after the post-Roman chaos, and he was non-urban or even anti-urban, cultivating and improving his land and organizing it with subject cultivators, as it were, in the hope of making a self-sufficing unit. How far the manor is derived from Gallo-Roman survivals as Fustel de Coulanges will have it, or from Frankish or Saxon ideas as De Tourville argues, or from circumstances of the times which emphasized defense and militated against freedom of exchange and promoted payments

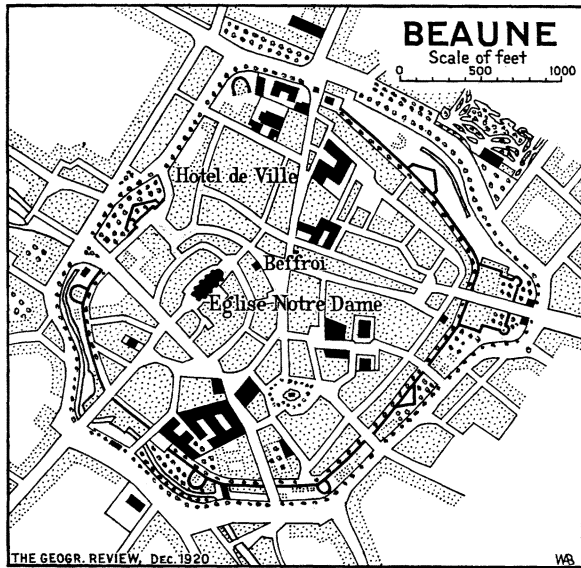


FIG. 5—Town map of Beaune.

in kind and in service, it is not to the point here to inquire. All are agreed that for a while the town was of small account.

But with the Frankish organization there went a strong effort towards forest clearing; the spread of cultivation in a corn land led inevitably to a good deal of differentiation of labor and growth of exchange. Fairs arose at several places, and markets at many more.

During the Merovingian (early Frankish) period the church won a special position attested in many ways in historic documents and based upon many facts, among which one of the chief was that churchmen were the men of learning and carried on, be it in ever so attenuated a fashion, the tradition of Roman respect for law and order.

The two complex groups of facts here merely hinted at give us the market and the church as two elements drawing men together for peace. We find the cathedral dominating the market place and the two dominating the whole town in city after city of the Paris Basin. The town is a place to

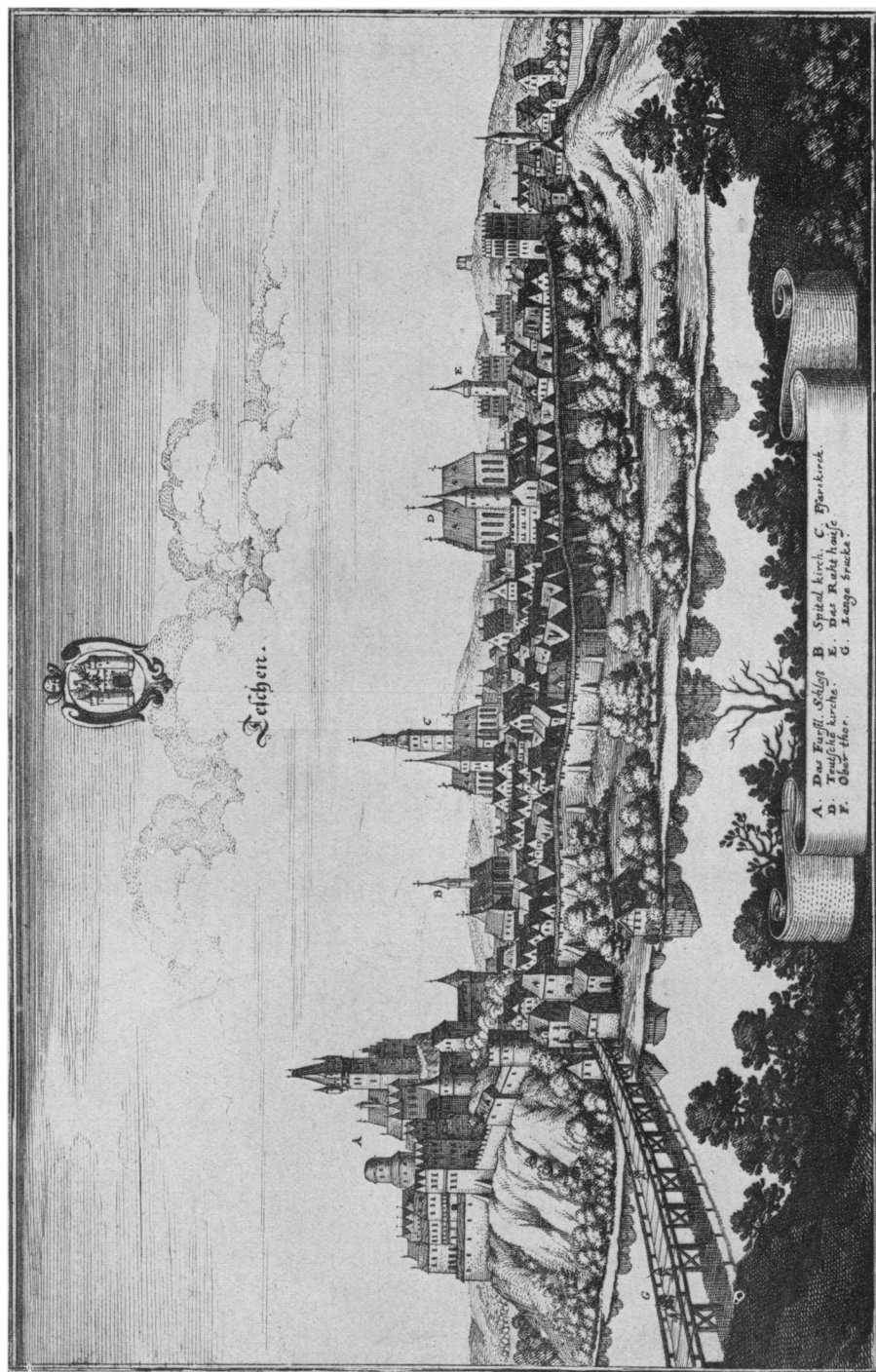


FIG. 6—View of Teschen in the seventeenth century. Note the dominance of the defensive features—thick walls and massive towers, and the fortified castle typical of a town in a "zone of strife." (From Matthaeus Merian: *Topographia Bohemiae, Moraviae et Silesiae*, Frankfurt, 1650.)

which the rural cultivators come to market and for festivals, and both are under the protection of the church. The church had prepared for its work by its long missionary effort on the Central Plateau where little towns cluster around a little church of hoary age.

With the growth of cultivation went increased diversity of occupation, especially in a region of mixed stock raising and corn growing, and the industrial workers gathered in the growing town in groups, occupying winding streets leading towards the market place. Many of them needed water, either for power or for the processes of industry, and the town needed water for its life; and moreover a bend of the river, especially in dissected plateau areas, offers a site for a town with reasonable facilities for defense and often a dignified position for the dominant church. We thus frequently find a town on a definite site either in the bend of a river or between a tributary and the main stream, or near a river on a hill spur that has somehow been partly isolated. Defense is important, and the walls and the castle, the river and its bridges are important features; but it is the church and the market that dominate the town.

As the town arose to meet the local needs in an area which was trying to be self-sufficient, under conditions spreading with only minor variations over the Paris Basin, it is naturally the case that the cities of the basin have a considerable likeness one to another. They are also fairly closely set, as we can well understand if we think of the difficulties of early transport and of the needs arising from the variations of stock raising and corn growing. There are some areas, however, like the plateau of La Beauce, where problems of water supply hindered town growth save in a few spots, or like the marshes of La Sologne, where towns cannot grow at all. The tortuous streets reveal the gradual growth of the town without the Roman resources and power of expression, but it may be doubted whether the crowding we associate with the old parts of the towns is always an original feature. It is probably such in some cases, but the towns are gathering places of an originally rural population, and we know from the plan of Roman Silchester and the lay-out of medieval Salisbury that rural folk coming into town wanted space for gardens.

#### THE CATHEDRAL THE CENTER OF CIVIC LIFE

Each craft often had its own street representing a group of workers with much co-operation in their workaday life, and the co-operation between the crafts in the life of the town as a whole centers around the church, frequently a cathedral with a bishop. The bishop was often of old a local leader rather than a part of the central organization, as he tended to be in nineteenth-century England. There would be a hospice in the town, and in many cases a great feature would be a Benedictine Abbey just outside the town, an agricultural college as well as a religious brotherhood. But the cathedral



expressed the town life most of all, however important the walls and the castle might be. It was much more than a place for religious offices; the nave was used by the citizens for many purposes, and it is interesting to

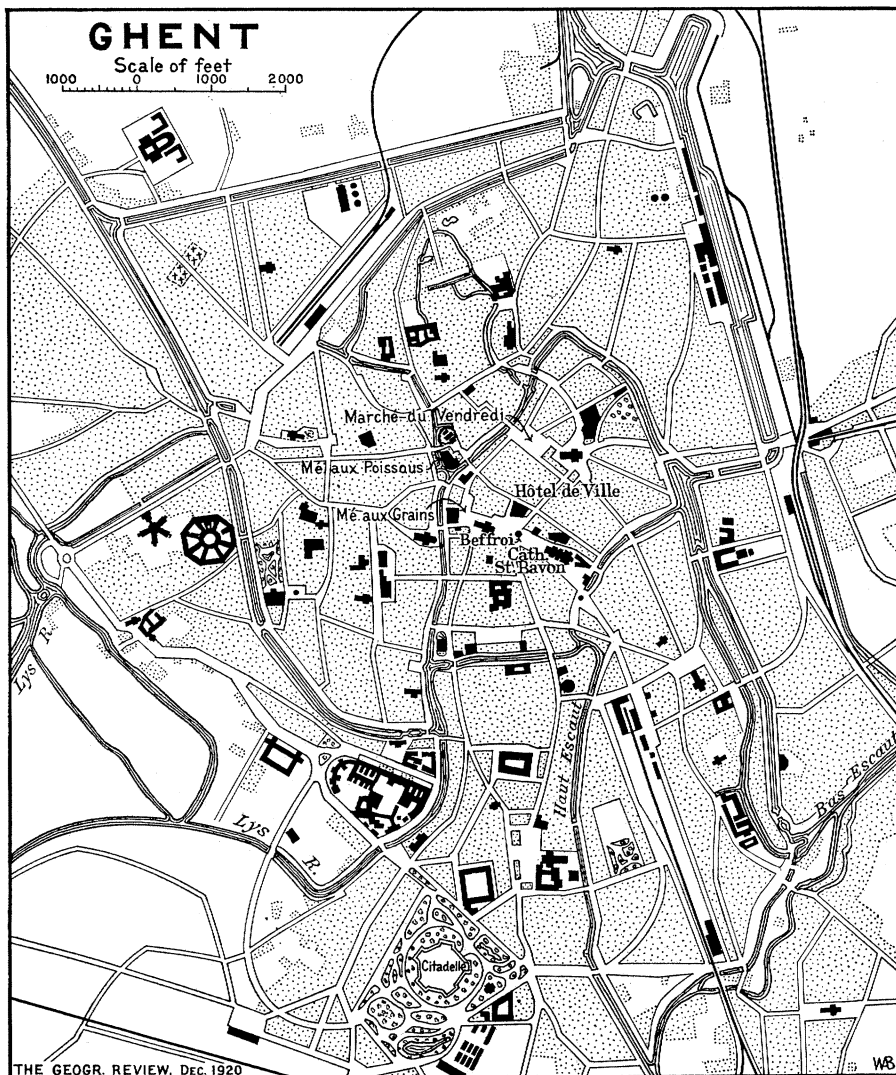


FIG. 7—Town map of Ghent. The commercial interests of Ghent are evidenced by the various markets, the largest of which, the *Marché du Vendredi*, was the center of the life of the medieval city, and the guild halls, the finest of which is the *Maison des Francs Bateliers* on the western side of the *Marché aux Grains*.

see French market women still coming into the church, baskets and all. The unity of the town centering in the cathedral is the leading feature in the Paris Basin. This point is emphasized here in order to enable us to follow modifications in other regions.

The larger market towns were centers to which, in the later Middle Ages, came the wealthier folk, by that time using the land for its amenities in hunting, etc., and as a source of revenue rather than a sphere of work. They built *hôtels*, i. e. mansions, some of which have become hotels in the modern sense, but it is characteristic of the Paris Basin that several have become museums and picture galleries, often of considerable local interest.



FIG. 8—View of Augsburg. The Karolinenstrasse, showing the old watch-tower and the town hall, with the towers of the cathedral in the background. (Copyright by Underwood & Underwood, New York.)

We are dealing with a country that has kept its peasantry, that has gone through many political revolutions, it is true, but has maintained a greater social continuity among the simpler folk than England has. The relation of this continuity to the broad distribution of a certain untutored taste is an interesting line of inquiry.

The decay of the abbeys has, unfortunately, transformed their neighborhood too often into a rather depressing quarter; but one can think of several cases in which that quarter is noted for hay and corn stores, stables, farriers, cart makers and menders, and small inns galore.

The variants within the Paris Basin and its borders include old towns like Caudebec-en-Caux, using for industry the water power of streams

gushing from beneath the chalk scarp, or like Falaise where the castle is unusually dominant.

### TOWNS OF THE ALEMANNIC AND FLEMISH BORDERS

An interesting addition to the equipment of the town, or perhaps rather an instance of differentiation of function, appears as we leave the Île-de-France and proceed either towards the Flemish or the Alemannic borders.

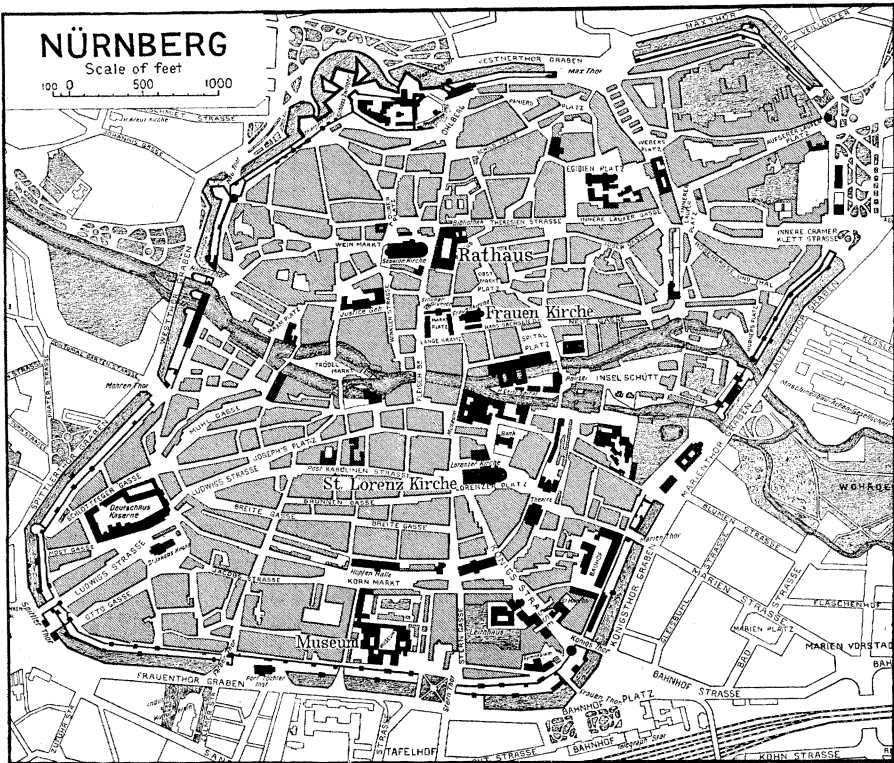


FIG. 9.—Town map of Nürnberg. The city of Nürnberg retains to a remarkable degree the aspect of a medieval Bürgerstadt. (From "The Story of Nuremberg," by Cecil Headlam. Reproduced by courtesy of J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, and E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.)

A *hôtel de ville* of medieval, though not early medieval, date becomes characteristic, and either on it or over a gate in the city wall stands a *beffroi*. With increasing distance from the central power the bourgeois life expressed itself more sturdily, and the preoccupation of the princes with war helped the citizens to gain their rights, but the *beffroi* also betokens the approach to the historic war zone and the need of the citizens to gather for their own defense against invaders seeking to penetrate into the good lands of the basin.

As we proceed further the dates of social evolutionary processes grow later, religious and secular become increasingly differentiated, and guild

halls of the crafts appear; they are notable, for example, in Flemish and Walloon cities. One may also recall in passing the conflicts of bourgeois and bishops in Geneva and the triumph of the former expressed in the subsequent story of the city of Calvin and Rousseau.

### THE GERMANIC CITIES

Needless to say, the variety of local circumstance and initiative led to much variation in the form of differentiation of social expression, and it

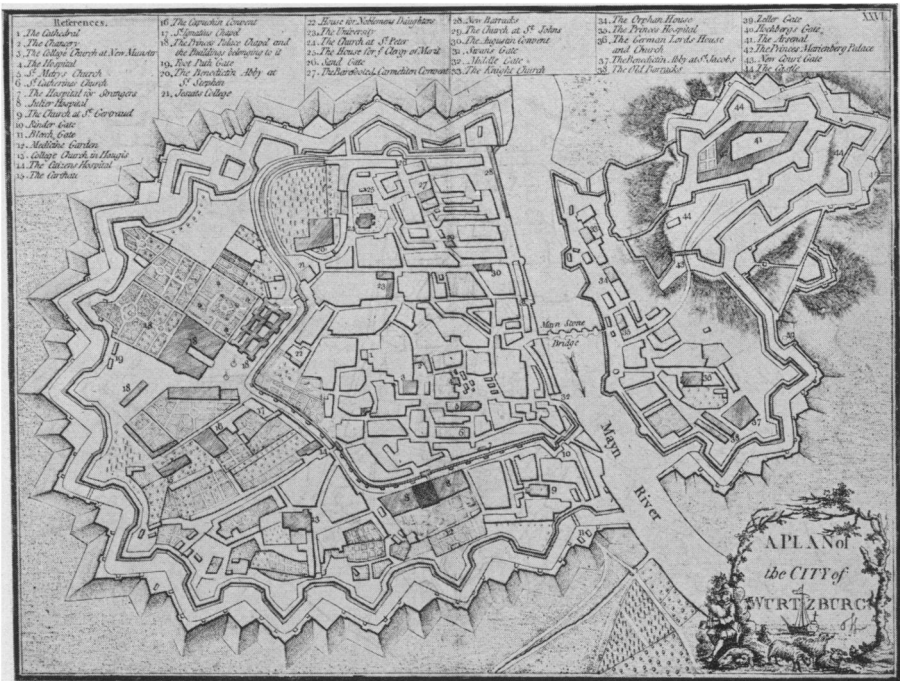


FIG. 10—Town plan of Würzburg. The Cathedral occupies a central location (1) but the whole city is dominated by the fortified castle of Marienberg on the left bank of the river (44). The University of Würzburg (23) still preserves much of the tradition of the medieval academic life. (From John Andrews: A collection of Plans of the most Capital Cities . . . ., London, 1772.)

is rather more difficult to see detailed community of type in the cities of the more Germanic lands. The cathedral is less dominant, the castle on the whole more so. The guild houses of the crafts in many cases are very notable additional features. *Bürger Deutschtum* and *Junker Deutschtum* show their conflict in the country's town maps, and we have to take account of the fact that the architecture we call Gothic was a creation of the Paris Basin and penetrated into Germany under the influence of ruling classes rather than as a popular movement. This helps us to understand the lessening of church dominance in the town map and the rarity of good Gothic architecture in Germany.

A marked difference between South Germany and the Paris Basin arises from the fact that South Germany has no such dominant center as Paris and also from the fact that much more of the substance of educated thought is an importation through the agency of rulers and leaders. The University of Paris, with its romantic growth and its relation to the church and people, is unique. Other universities of the basin did not attain much strength, Paris dominating too directly. In South Germany the universities are numerous in ever so many of the sub-centers of that diversified region, and

they sometimes dominate the city. They are all universities of the Paris type, i. e. groups of teachers with pupils gathered around them, not of the southern type which is fundamentally a student democracy. The physical diversification, again, in delaying political unification allowed to a far greater extent than in France the specialization of cities as fair centers with a large measure of independence, and these cities with their market places and their houses of merchant princes are a well-known feature. The cities of Ghent and Augsburg come to one's mind here.

We must not, however, push our working hypothesis too far. Not all the features of a Germanic city are to be looked upon as derived by a process of

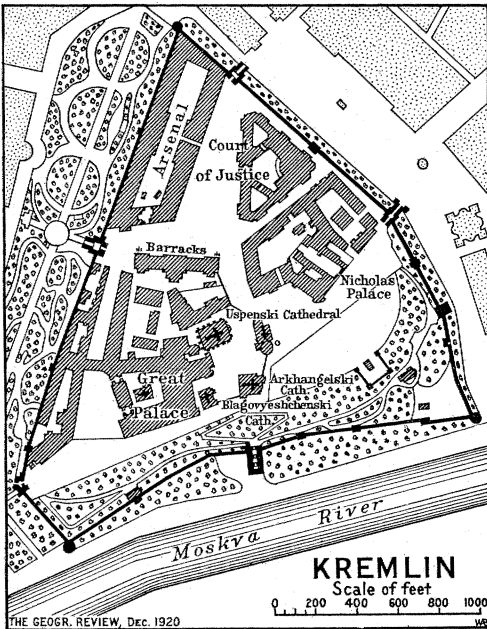


FIG. 11.—The Kremlin. "The Chiefs' Town" of Moscow contains the palaces of the rulers, the cathedral of the orthodox church, the court of justice, and the arsenal.

importation from the Paris Basin accompanied by various types of differentiation. That hypothesis helps us in some measure, but we cannot live in Zurich, for example, without realizing that there are also products of the thought and tradition of the local inhabitants, both Alpine and Nordic. The cities of *Bürger Deutschtum* deserve our keen appreciation, even when their churches seem strange and cold in comparison with those of France. They are cities built for the citizens' life, and the seeking of private profit has not that unique prominence which makes modern English industrial cities, and some others too, such a sad commentary on western civilization. A striking feature is that many of the German cities in spite of their immense growth in the industrial and financial periods have still kept their old character. The city fathers were wise enough not to let the municipal lands get into private hands, and so the industrial growth has in many cases

been on public land, and the amenities of life have received some consideration. Slums do not seem inevitable, railways and docks have been placed with some regard to the public interest. Theater and concert hall are supported by the city and are able to provide opportunities for musical talent and for the citizens' healthful enjoyment that are often matter for

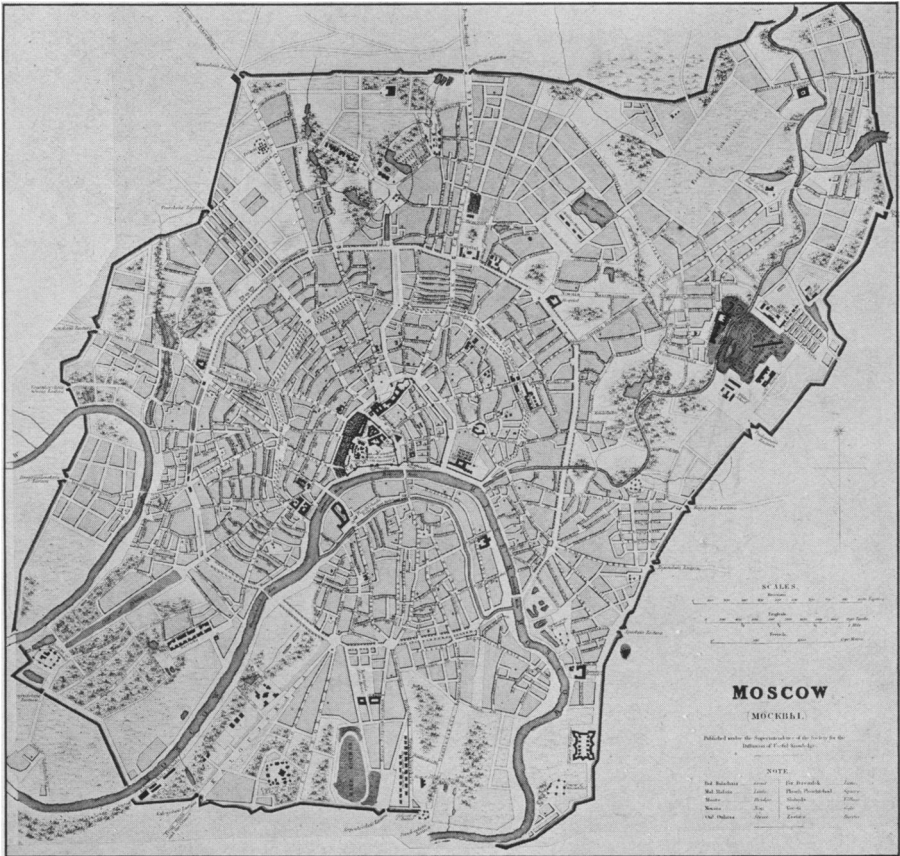


FIG. 12—Town map of Moscow, 1839. The plan clearly shows the distinction drawn between the rulers and the people. A broad open space for intercourse and exchange separates the Kremlin from the people's city. Compare view of Moscow, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 1, 1916, p. 259.

envy. Governmental regulation in the past half-century seriously lessened the good derived from all this, but, if that source of danger is now really removed, the *Bürgerstadt* may once more become a great contributor to our common civilization.

#### CITIES OF EASTERN EUROPE

Further east the general type of city tends to change again. Importations from the west by rulers and leaders stand out still more distinctly.

At Prague, for example, on one side of the river we have the fortress, with the palace and the cathedral within it, standing out over against mercantile Prague on the other bank, with its *Rathhaus* and its *Tynkirche*. The *Junkerstadt* and the *Bürgerstadt* are distinct, though both are German to a considerable degree.

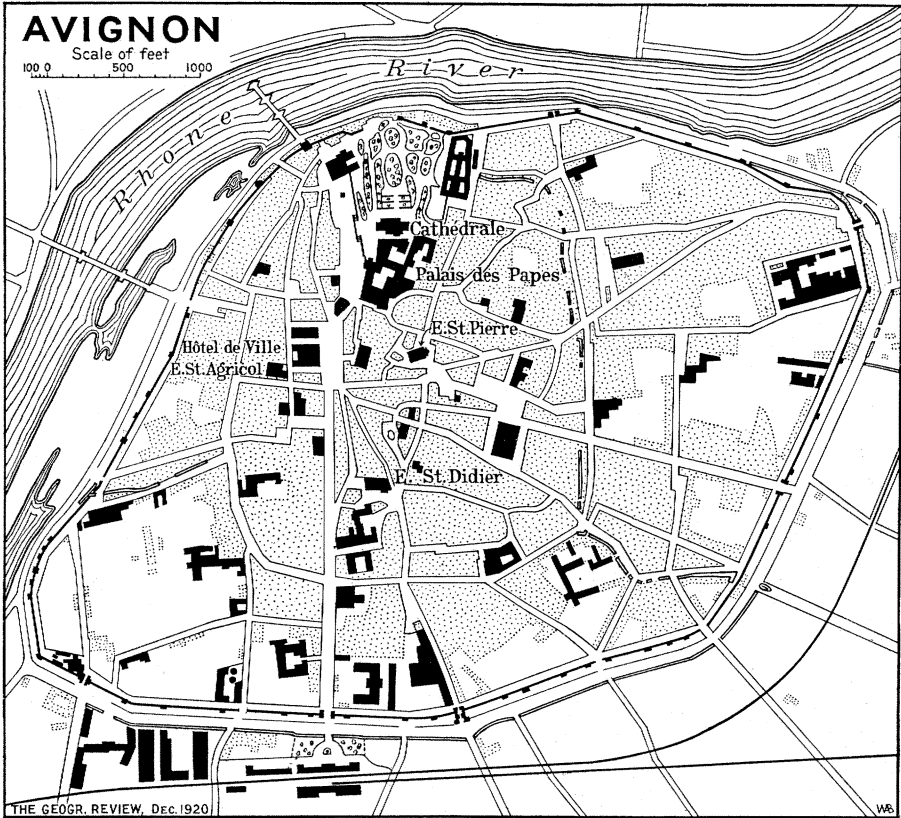


FIG. 13—Town map of Avignon. The Palace of the Popes (see Fig. 3), overlooking the town and its suburbs, marks the domination of a foreign power.

Eastward, again, the element of importation is still stronger and has become dominant. The Russian Slavs look upon themselves as colonists in clearings of the forest—colonists who have come from the Galician platform in the course of centuries. They are only semi-settled, and their share in the civic life is only a secondary one. The towns grew around the settlements of Varangian chiefs and Hanseatic traders with the help of religious permeation northward from Byzantium through Kiev. The center of the city, whether at Moscow or Novgorod, is the *kremlin*. It corresponds in a sense to the Hradschin at Prague, but here it occupies the heart of the city which radiates around it in every direction. Here, also,



we have no rival center with *Rathhaus* and *Tynkirche*. The Kremlin at Moscow includes three great cathedrals, eighteen other churches, and also palaces and fortifications. It is literally a chiefs' town; and outside its crenelated walls were planned open spaces for intercourse and exchange, and some churches and other buildings of the people's city have grown there. Beyond them the people's city radiates in all directions. At Moscow it is easy to see how the religious spirit of the Russian peasantry has sanc-

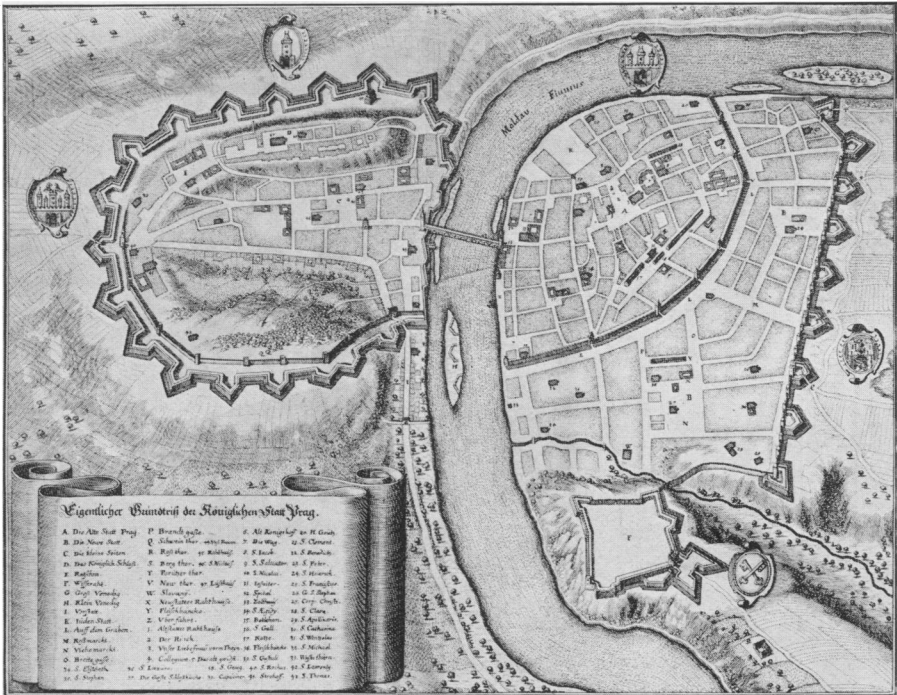


FIG. 14—Town plan of Prague. The Old Town and the New Town, on the right bank of the Moldau, form the mercantile center of the city, with its markets, (2, N and M), its town-halls, (1 and X), and the Jews' quarter (K). On the left bank stands the Hradschin, the fortified residence of the Bohemian kings, with its barracks and cathedral. (From Matthaeus Merian: *Topographia Bohemiae, Moraviae et Silesiae*, Frankfurt, 1650.)

tified the commonplace by building the innumerable churches of the Mother City, but at its center is the strange combination of Varangian and Byzantine with who knows what strange touches of the mystery of the East.

### AVIGNON COMPARED WITH MOSCOW

One famous French city presents the most interesting analogies to Moscow. It is Avignon, the city of the popes. Avignon has its southern market place and its scores of other characteristics of an ordinary city of the south, but it is completely dominated by the grim palace of the popes, and within the *enceinte* of that palace the cathedral also finds its place. Outside its



ramparts is an open space marking off this monument of a temporary foreign domination from the rest of the city. In other words, there is the brusque juxtaposition of foreign and indigenous organizations in Avignon somewhat as there is in Moscow. No one who knows France will need to be told how Avignon stands apart from other French cities in character.

#### SUMMARY

The surface of temperate Europe, from the shores of the North Sea and the English Channel on the west to the southern part of the Urals on the east, was covered by deciduous forest before man cleared it. The summer



FIG. 15—The Castle and Cathedral of Cracow. (Photograph copyright by Brown Brothers, New York.)

westerlies bring rain that keeps this vegetation healthy, and the soil is warm enough to allow the roots to act freely and draw up the abundant moisture given off by the spreading leaves. The leaves are dropped as the winter cold sets in. The régime which favors the deciduous forest also favors, or at least permits, corn cultivation. Permanent settlement is possible where the growth of one season of the year provides the main part of the food for the twelve months. To the north, where the soil is colder and the roots may not work so freely, only the pines, much more economical in their demands for water, can grow. The soil of the pine forest yields very meager return to the cultivator, and so the belt of the deciduous forest is, broadly, the northern belt of cultivation in Europe.

The Paris Basin was the first of the regions of the deciduous forest to be extensively cleared, and in the post-Roman centuries forest clearing was proceeding here and spreading eastwards generation by generation. It affected many parts of Germany in the seventh to the ninth centuries and continued later in Bohemia and Poland and later still in Russia, where the forest is of oak without the more exacting beech for a companion. Forest clearing led to improved conditions for settled life, and settlement became

well defined in the Paris Basin while as yet the Germanic lands were in the wild. The progress of settled life eastwards has been a most noteworthy feature of European history and of late has been affecting Russia in an increasing measure with corresponding increase of difficulties in the matter of land ownership.

Settlements were at first largely rural. Cultivators of wheat sought supplies of salt as an accompaniment of a cereal diet and necessarily of a winter diet that included pork. Urban centers grew up in course of time as a necessary consequence. Just as in earlier efforts so here the Paris Basin led, and the cities of that basin mark the blossoming of settled life after the centuries of post-Roman movements. On the whole, city development becomes later as we go eastwards. Again Prague and Warsaw in the center of riverine regions are younger than Domazlice and Cracow in the gates of the hills. Both Prague and Warsaw are known to have been founded in forest clearings and to have replaced the older cities in leadership of their respective regions.

With extension of settled life and urban life went the eastward extension of the Roman Church in its medieval form, heralded by St. Augustine's famous discussion of the City of God. The chain of thought he encouraged contributed its quota to the character of the city as it arose in the early Middle Ages in the Paris Basin with the cathedral as in a large measure a synthesis of its common life. But time brings definition, and definition brings differentiation of function with the inevitable consequence of differentiation of structure. So we get *hôtel de ville* or *Rathhaus* side by side with the cathedral on the eastward and northeastward road, and guild halls of the crafts show us a further stage of the process. Moreover, the multitude of smaller and more local causes included under the name of chance make the differentiation take divers forms in divers cities of the Germanic lands. Add to this also the undoubted direct influence of the *genius loci*.

Thence we pass on to the regions where western ways were introduced by the leading classes, and with this we find the differentiation of a leader city with palace and cathedral within its ramparts. Naturally we find this especially after crossing the formidable language barrier between the western tongues and the eastern Slavonic ones. At the same time other factors, factors arising from the life and thoughts of the native population, affect the more easterly cities; and nowhere are they more evident than in Moscow consecrated by the gift of generations of Russian pilgrims to its ever increasing number of shrines.

Finally we may notice the cities of the steppe border in Russia founded as the authority of settled life and its form of government spread and pushed the nomadic life back again towards the east during the recent comparatively wet climatic phase. They were founded where land was abundant by ambitious leaders commanding considerable experience and resources. They show the rectangular plan typical of civilized effort not only in modern Russia and the New World but also in the ancient Mediterranean region

and Mesopotamia and apparently the ancient Orient as well. Abundance of land has meant over wide streets in Russia, just as costliness of privately owned land has meant disastrous overcrowding in industrial cities in England and elsewhere. To trace the extension of civic expression from France to Britain would be at least as interesting as to trace it eastward through the deciduous forest but other factors have been at work with their modifying effect.

The study of the city map, we may now conclude, stimulates many thoughts about the progress of humanity, about that complex interweaving of environmental influence and cumulative human effort through the centuries which it is a special function of the geographer to try to interpret.